

Red-breasted Merganser

Mergus serrator

International threshold: 1,700
 Great Britain threshold: 98
 All-Ireland threshold: 35*

GB max: 3,007 Feb
 NI max: 441 Dec

*50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

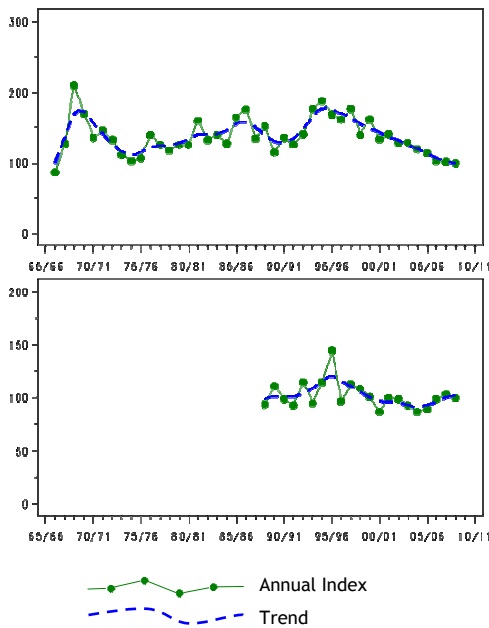


Figure 30.a, Annual indices & trend for Red-breasted Merganser for GB (above) & NI (below).

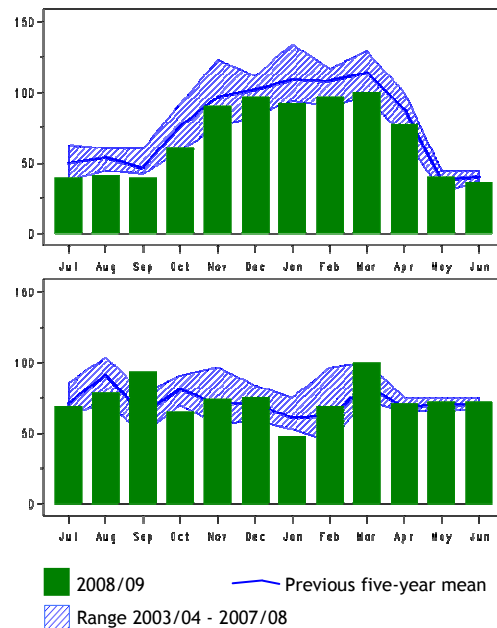


Figure 30.b, Monthly indices for Red-breasted Merganser for GB (above) & NI (below).

Over the course of the last thirty to forty years, the number of Red-breasted Mergansers wintering in parts of the range to the east of the UK has increased steadily (e.g. Nilsson 2008, Hustings *et al.* 2009). In complete contrast, the trend in Britain over the course of the last fifteen or so years has been one of steady decline, albeit with very little change noted since 2006/07, inclusive. The last twenty years have also seen the species in steep decline in France (Fouque *et al.* 2009).

As is considered to be the case with many other wildfowl, these changes are suggestive of a shift in wintering distribution, probably due to more suitable conditions further north and east. However, as very little is known about the movements of British Red-breasted Mergansers the precise extent to which this is affecting the observed trend in Britain is unknown.

The monthly maximum at Forth Estuary of 260 in December represents another very low peak for what is traditionally the most important site. The five-year average there has fallen by 40% over the course of the last ten years. To place this year's maximum into context, 1,053 birds (the largest ever WeBS count) were noted there as recently as October 1994. In addition, the sites table below indicates that a suite of other sites have also experienced falling peak numbers.

More typical numbers compared to recent years were recorded at the principal sites in Northern Ireland, however, where the overall trend remains largely stable. The peak of 252 birds at Larne Lough in September represents the highest site count in Northern Ireland since 285 noted at Strangford Lough in 1998/99.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Forth Estuary	544	489	347	(261)	260	Dec	410
Fleet and Wey	413	438	284	307	341	Feb	357
Poole Harbour	315	(250)	(213)	(117)	(241)	Jan	315
Moray Firth	300	254	211	366	(195)	Oct	283
Morecambe Bay	167	263	(118)	(233)	188	Nov	213
Chichester Harbour	194	212	217	211	157	Mar	198
Inner Firth of Clyde	107	252	195	168	202	Apr	185
Langstone Harbour	128	187	159	169	114	Mar	151
Whiteness to Skelda Ness	68 ¹⁰	145 ¹⁰	134 ¹⁰	192 ¹⁰			135
Lavan Sands	(211)	196	81	110	68	Mar	133
Loch Ryan	179	180	106	100	101	Feb	133
Montrose Basin	(39)	163	135	99	113	Jul	128
Duddon Estuary	152	(121)	106	123	92	Jan	119
North Norfolk Coast	126	132	92	131	94	Dec	115
Jersey Shore			126	90			108
Loch Lomond	(4)	129	8	54	240	Apr	108 ▲
Exe Estuary	82	78	139	79	140	Mar	104
Goring	(102)						(102)
Tay Estuary	60	172	57 ¹¹	103	(47)	Dec	98
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Strangford Lough	189	263	390 ¹¹	(282)	(198)	Dec	281
Larne Lough	211	151	196	142	252	Sep	190
Carlingford Lough	154	118	171	106	(29)	Dec	137
Lough Foyle	(52)	169	(35)	99	125	Mar	131
Belfast Lough	91 ¹³	104	110	183	160	Nov	130
Outer Ards Shoreline	54	31	108	38	45	Mar	55
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Arran	90	113	(129)	59	43	Jan	87
Loch of Tankerness	222	1			6	Mar	76
Inner Loch Indaal (no data for years shown in table)							
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Rova Head to Wadbister Ness	54 ¹⁰	59 ¹⁰		72 ¹⁰	157 ¹⁰	Feb	86
The Wash	46	54	70	53	136	Feb	72

Goosander

Mergus merganser

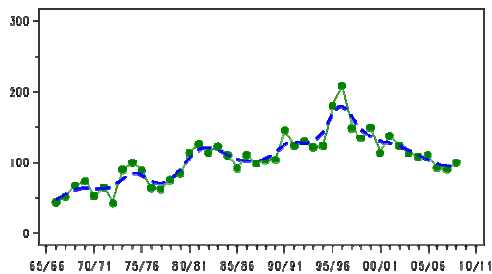
International threshold: 2,700

Great Britain threshold: 161[†]

All-Ireland threshold: +[†]

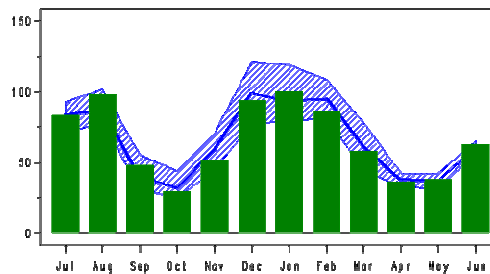
GB max: 3,213 Jan

NI max: 2 Feb



—●— Annual Index
- - - Trend

Figure 31.a, Annual indices & trend for Goosander for GB.



■ 2008/09 — Previous five-year mean
▨ Range 2003/04 - 2007/08

Figure 31.b, Monthly indices for Goosander for GB.

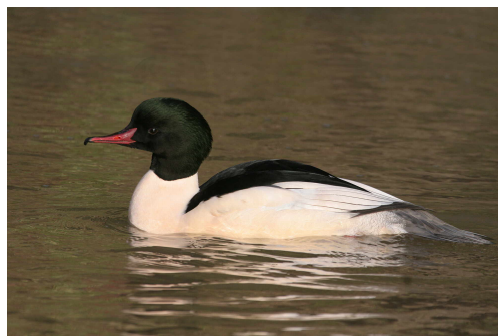
Goosanders that winter in Britain are considered to be largely derived from the British breeding population, although some in the southeast may originate from overseas populations which can be involved in influxes that typically take place during cold weather on the continent.

Similar to the pattern shown by Goldeneye and Red-breasted Merganser, numbers of Goosanders wintering in Britain have declined steadily since the peak in the index was reached in the mid 1990s. Furthermore, in many years the monthly indices imply below average numbers present during the core winter period, although this was not so much the case in 2008/09. Numbers noted during late summer, and therefore relating to post-breeding aggregations, showed no such signs of decline; evidence of the rising breeding population (Baillie *et al.* 2010).

Three-figure counts in 2008/09 comprised August peaks of 232 at Tay Estuary and 217 at Loch Lomond, as well as 116 at both Montrose Basin and Castle Loch, Lochmaben. Further south, in England where winter counts are likely to relate to continental immigrants, numbers were close to or slightly above the recent average. Notable counts in that respect were logged at River Avon (Fordingbridge to Ringwood), Old Moor and Lee Valley Gravel

Pits, all of which held above average numbers.

Although widespread through north and west Britain, Goosanders are scarce in Northern Ireland; singles at Inner Larne Lough in September and January, followed by two at Loughs Neagh and Beg in February, being the only records of the year.



Goosander (Jill Pakenham)

WeBS counters should be aware that numbers of Goosanders encountered at favoured sites can vary according to the time day when the site is visited. During the winter, Goosanders frequently return to communal roosts late in the afternoon, having been more widely dispersed during the day. Submission of roost counts from key sites, in order to supplement core counts, is therefore welcomed.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 70 or more birds in Great Britain[†]							
Tay Estuary	263	153	313	(155)	232	Aug	240
Loch Lomond	(15)	19	261	36	217	Aug	133
Tynninghame Estuary	189	69	157	107	68	Jun	118
Forth Estuary	81	119	119	(108)	(68)	Aug	107
River Tweed: Kelso to Coldstream	112	113	74	90	49	Nov	88
Ashworth Moor Reservoir	110 ¹²	90 ¹²		59 ¹²			86
Eccup Reservoir	94	115	82	70	60	Jan	84
Solway Estuary	84	(47)	(29)	(25)	(50)	Aug	84
Castle Loch Lochmaben	88	0	85	120	116	Dec	82
Spittal to Cocklawburn	86	72	116	52	54	Jul	76
Tweed Estuary	65	64	123	42	85	Jul	76
Windermere	48	127	76 ¹³	57	68 ¹³	Oct	75
Blithfield Reservoir	72			51	96 ¹²	Dec	73
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain[†]							
Montrose Basin	22	60	57	59	116	Aug	63
River Avon: Fordingbridge to Ringwood	36	57	53	43	92	Jan	56
Lochs Davan and Kinord	12	19	26	31	70	Oct	32

[†] as few sites exceed the British and no Northern Ireland thresholds has been set, a qualifying level of 70 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

Ruddy Duck
Oxyura jamaicensis

Naturalised introduction
Native Range: America

GB max: 761 Oct
NI max: 21 Feb

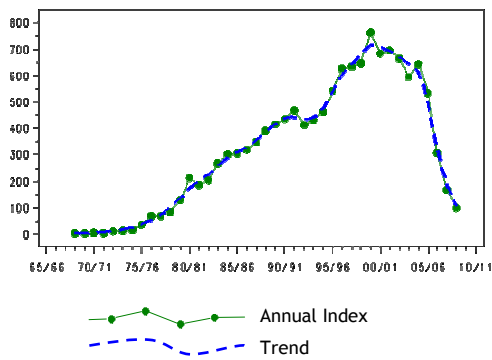


Figure 32.a, Annual indices & trend for Ruddy Duck for GB.

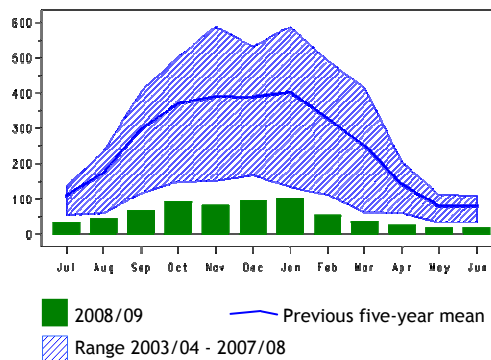


Figure 32.b, Monthly indices for Ruddy Duck for GB.

The Ruddy Duck has been the focus of a co-ordinated international programme to contain and eradicate this North American species in Europe, as part of the conservation effort to save the White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala* in Spain and other parts of Europe.

Despite managing to maintain a widespread distribution, the British index has inevitably dropped further and now places the species at the same level of abundance as thirty-five years ago.

In 2008/09, no sites registered more than 100 Ruddy Ducks for the first time since standardised monitoring of the species by volunteers has taken place. Counts of 30+ were received from 17 sites, compared to 27 during 2007/08, and 34 during 2006/07. The largest counts during the year were in mid-winter; from Abberton Reservoir, Staines Reservoirs and Chew Valley Lake. In Northern Ireland, Loughs Neagh and Beg remained the principal site where a high of 21 birds constituted a similar peak as in the previous year.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites with mean peak counts of 30 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Staines Reservoirs	695 ²⁹	521 ²⁹	277	72	69	Jan	327
Abberton Reservoir	403	455	261 ²⁹	49	96	Jan	253
Hanningfield Reservoir	412 ²⁹	330	276	45	36	Oct	220
Dungeness and Rye Bay	287	257	193	73	31	Sep	168
Hilfield Park Reservoir	241 ²⁹	176	263	83	31	Dec	159
Chew Valley Lake	220 ²⁹	257 ²⁹	(130)	17	65	Dec	140
Pitsford Reservoir	178	311 ²⁹	102	41	40	Jan	134
Bliethfield Reservoir	401	59 ²⁹	23 ²⁹	51	(38)	Oct	134
Blagdon Lake	151 ²⁹	172	85	103	36	Nov	109
Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits	189	202	106	38	8	Nov	109
Carsington Water	82 ²⁹	182	101	132	17	Jan	103
Anglers Country Park Lake	180 ²⁹	185	34	37	24	Oct	92
Tophill Low Reservoirs	124	131	85 ²⁹	63	38	Dec	88
Thames Estuary	85	85	79	73	(6)	Oct	81
Brent Reservoir	133	77	85	46	30	Sep	74
Humber Estuary	84	(27)	59 ²⁹	(31)	(14)	Apr	72
Colne Valley Gravel Pits	33	215 ²⁹	99 ²⁹	4	4	Sep	71
Rutland Water	251	57	17	5	25	Jan	71
Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits	58 ²⁹	126 ²⁹	(16)	(38)	17	Oct	67
Sutton and Lound Gravel Pits	175	13	64	39	18	Aug	62
Walthamstow Reservoirs	90	86 ²⁹	74	38	7	Dec	59
Wigan Flashes	86		73 ²⁹	55	22	Sep	59

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Tees Estuary	37	63	111	13	36	Oct	52
Llyn Alaw	45	95	92	18	10	Dec	52
Colwick Country Park	100 ²⁹	51	37 ²⁹	27	38	Nov	51
Cotswold Water Park (West)	125	59	34	23	11	Dec	50
Thoresby Lake	46 ²⁹	42 ²⁹	52 ²⁹				47
King George V Reservoirs	(23)	83	45	15	42	Jan	46
Mersey Estuary				85	6	Jul	46
Clumber Park Lake	16 ²⁹	41	66	82	22	Nov	45
Knight and Bessborough Reservoirs	46	45	58	46	22	Jan	43
Attenborough Gravel Pits	22	43	40	44	(56)	Jan	41
Llyn Trawfll	78	52	55	16	4	Dec	41
Blackwater Estuary	71	39	56	15	17	Sep	40
Hornsea Mere	98	11	(18)	31	7	Nov	37
London Wetland Centre	59	49 ²⁹	(46)	20	8	Sep	36
Edderthorpe Flash			17	78	8	Sep	34
Galley Pools	18	49	31	(8)			33
Old Moor	24	71	20	24	22	Aug	32
Sites with mean peak counts of 30 or more birds in Northern Ireland[†]							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	33	36	42	22	21	Feb	31
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain[†]							
Lapwing Hall Pool			3	30	50	Oct	28
Swillington Ings	32	22	23	8	34	Oct	24

[†] as no British or All-Ireland thresholds have been set a qualifying level of 30 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

Lake Duck

Oxyura vittata

Escape
Native Range: S America

A single was seen at Netherfield Gravel Pits in August-September; a regular site for the species in recent years.

Red-throated Diver

Gavia stellata

International threshold: 3,000
Great Britain threshold: 170
All-Ireland threshold: 20*

GB max: 1,141 Jan
NI max: 111 Mar

*50 is normally used as a minimum threshold

Although only a localised breeder in northern Scotland, with strongholds on Shetland and Outer Hebrides (Dillon *et al.* 2009), Red-throated Divers are widespread at coastal sites throughout the UK during the winter. An estimated 17,000 individuals spend the winter in British waters (O'Brien *et al.* 2008).

In 2008/09, the species was noted at 135 sites in Britain and a further nine in Northern Ireland; a slight reduction compared to the last two years. No regularly counted WeBS sites currently qualify as internationally important, although large numbers can be recorded during offshore surveys of favoured areas. However, no such data collected during 2008/09 were available for inclusion in this report, and for the second year in a row

there were no counts of Aberdeen Bay undertaken by JNCC.

Significant concentrations were reported from southern Britain in January and February, including 517 at Pegwell Bay, 343 at Glyne Gap and 85 at Dungeness & Rye Bay, providing an indication of the true numbers which are likely to be present along the south and east coastlines of England as a whole. In winter, Red-throated Divers are known to concentrate in areas with suitable foraging, and these shallow waters off the East Sussex and Kent coasts are clearly important in this regard.

Further north, numbers at two traditionally important Scottish sites, Moray Firth and Forth Estuary, were down on the previous year, but 97 at Loch Ryan in February represents the most ever reported

from there. Numbers were close to average across all sites in Northern Ireland.

Relative to overall abundance, Red-throated Divers tend to be noted less at

inland sites in southern Britain than their Great Northern, and even Black-throated, cousins. In 2008/09, there were just two such inland records.



Red-throated Diver (Edmund Fellowes)

Aerial surveys employing distance sampling

Area	Date	Counted	Estimate (confidence intervals)	Ref
S.Norfolk/N.Suffolk offshore	Mar	161	not available	WWT Consulting 2010
Liverpool Bay	Feb	47	not available	WWT Consulting 2010

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain[†]							
Aberdeen Bay offshore	423 ⁴³	352 ⁴³	175 ⁴³				317
Inner Firth of Clyde	34	202	182	199	139	Apr	151
Glyne Gap	6	103	126	(109)	(343)	Jan	137
Pegwell Bay	10	5	12	11	517	Jan	111 ▲
Don Mouth to Ythan Mouth	61	163	(77)	70	(32)	Mar	98
Forth Estuary	132	87	53	48	82	Sep	80
North Norfolk Coast	30	18	226	27	62	Jan	73
Loch Ryan	81	49	83	43	97	Feb	71
Moray Firth	117	81	46	53	18	Jan	63
Cardigan Bay	30	67	(46)	(0)	(0)		49 ▲
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Lough Foyle	21	98	13	53	81	Mar	53
Belfast Lough	16 ¹³	30	22	67	20	Dec	31
Outer Ards Shoreline	14	8	64	22	12	Mar	24
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09[†]							
Minsmere	3	2	56	143 ¹³	10	Mar	43
Outer Tay and St Andrews Bay offshore	33 ²⁴						33
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain[†]							
Dungeness and Rye Bay	6	4	(1)	2	85	Feb	24

[†] as few sites exceed the British threshold, a qualifying level of 50 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

Black-throated Diver

Gavia arctica

International threshold: 3,750

Great Britain threshold: 7*

All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 114 Feb

NI max: 1 Oct

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

Black-throated Divers were recorded at 60 sites in the UK during WeBS Core counts, with thirteen of these qualifying as being nationally important. Typically most sightings were in Scotland, the majority of English records were from favoured areas on the south coast, and just two individuals were noted in Wales and Northern Ireland.

One can only assume that improved coverage along the coastline of northwest Scotland, such as that undertaken each February by the RAF Ornithological Society, would inevitably derive a truer picture of this species' winter status.

The premier site for wintering Black-throated Divers in the UK is Gerrans Bay in Cornwall. Numbers there have been very

consistent in recent years, averaging 57 over the course of the last five years. Further east on the English south coast, Glyne Gap consolidated its importance for the region's scarcest diver. Notable numbers of other marine species (e.g. see Red-throated Diver and Red-necked Grebe) have been reported from Glyne Gap in recent years; presumably an indication of the foraging conditions offshore.

All the remaining sites were in Scotland where the peak Core count was 16 along the stretch of coast from Girvan to Turnberry in December, and where a further 19 were reported in Sound of Gigha in November. There were no records from southern Britain away from the open sea.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Gerrans Bay	47	70	60	53	55	Jan	57
Sound of Barra (Barra)		35 ³⁶					35
Loch Ewe	0	(3)	40	(11)	(11)	Feb	20
Sound of Gigha					19 ¹³	Nov	19 ▲
Loch Slapin	26 ³²		28 ¹²	13 ¹²	1	Nov	17
Loch Gairloch	28	6	14	(14)	(10)	Feb	16
Moray Firth	6	19	9	(4)	(1)	Oct	11
Little Loch Broom	3	(10)	13	(16)	5	Feb	9
Applecross Bay	5	14	2	13	9	Feb	9
Girvan to Turnberry	(9)	5	1	7	16	Dec	8
Kilfinan Bay				11	5	Dec	8
Glyne Gap	0	8	(9)	(9)	(10)	Jan	7 ▲
Red Point to Port Henderson	0	13 ¹³	8	(1)	6	Feb	7
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in Winter 2008/2009							
Broad Bay (Lewis)							
Sites with mean peak counts of 2 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Strangford Lough	4	0	3 ¹³	0	4 ¹³	Nov	2
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Dunnet Bay			0	0	(8)	Feb	3

† as no All-Ireland threshold has been set, a qualifying level of 2 has been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

Great Northern Diver

Gavia immer

International threshold: 50

Great Britain threshold: 30*†

All-Ireland threshold: ?†

GB max: 324 Feb

NI max: 24 Jan

**50 is normally used as a minimum threshold*

Following WeBS-year 2008/09, eight counted areas on the Scottish west coast now support internationally important numbers of Great Northern Divers. Further

count data from sites along this stronghold of the Scottish coast would be highly beneficial in order to illustrate the true status of this species within UK waters.

Away from Scotland, records were received from 41 sites in England, seven in Wales and six in Northern Ireland. The peak count in England was 17 at Gerrans Bay in March, the most noted there since the same total was logged in February 2003.

In a typical WeBS year, sporadic singles are noted at inland wetlands. However 2008/09 was above average in that not only was the species recorded at ten sites, but five of those sites had more than one

individual. The sites supporting multiple birds (with maxima) were King George VI Reservoir (2), Rutland Water (2), Middle Tame Valley Gravel Pits (4), Carsington Water (5) and Draycote Water (5). The counts for Middle Tame Valley and Carsington are the highest ever recorded by WeBS at those sites, however, that for Draycote is eclipsed by the all-time inland WeBS peak of twelve there in November 2005!

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of international importance in the UK							
Sound of Gigha	104 ²⁴	203 ²⁴			217 ¹³	Nov	175
Coll and Tiree offshore	131 ²⁴						131
Scarp to Vatersay offshore	57 ²⁴	188 ²⁴					123
Sound of Barra (Barra)	94 ³⁶						94
Scapa Flow, Shapinsay and Deer Sounds		85 ²⁴					85
Outer Loch Indaal	20	108					64
South Uist West Coast	(63) ³⁶						(63)
Coll and Tiree and west Mull offshore		51 ²⁴					51
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in Winter 2008/2009							
Scapa Flow	33 ²⁴						33
Sites with mean peak counts of 10 or more birds in Great Britain†							
Sound of Harris	42 ³⁶						42
Gruinard Bay	26	40	37	68	29	Feb	40
Loch Ewe	19	33	53	58	28	Feb	38
Loch Slapin	59 ³²		39 ¹²	24 ¹²	27	Nov	37
Kirkabister to Wadbister Ness	(2) ¹⁰	37 ¹⁰		33 ¹⁰			35
Scapa Flow	33 ²⁴						33
Luce Bay offshore		29 ²⁴					29
Traigh Luskentyre	22		58	6			29
Loch Na Keal				27 ¹³			27
West Mull offshore	27 ²⁴						27
Quendale to Virkie	22 ¹⁰	27 ¹⁰		27 ¹⁰			25
Loch Eriboll	0	3	36	66	16	Feb	24
Dinas Dinlle to Afon Llifon		25 ¹³		34 ¹³	8 ¹³	Jan	22
Whiteness to Skelda Ness	30 ¹⁰	11 ¹⁰	14 ¹⁰	23 ¹⁰			20
Broadford Bay	24	(20)	15	19	16	Dec	19
Rova Head to Wadbister Ness	4 ¹⁰	17 ¹⁰		36 ¹⁰			19
Uyea Sound	5	7	62	9	5	Nov	18
Scalloway Islands	13 ¹⁰	19 ¹⁰		17 ¹⁰			16
Gerrans Bay	14	16	15	13	17	Mar	15
Little Loch Broom	8	(7)	16	(10)	22	Feb	15
Moray Firth	37	14	2	4	(1)	Oct	14
Pontllyfni to Aberdesach	30 ¹³	11 ¹³		2 ¹³	8 ¹³	Jan	13
Red Point to Port Henderson	17	22 ¹³	4	(13)	6	Feb	12
Talmine				10	13	Feb	12
Burra and Trondra	7 ¹⁰	8 ¹⁰		21 ¹⁰			12
Fort Belan to Dinas Dinlle		6 ¹³		15 ¹³	8 ¹³	Jan	10
Afon Llifon to Pontllyfni		13 ¹³		11 ¹³	5 ¹³	Feb	10
Dunnet Bay			6	6	(18)	Feb	10
Island of Egilsay	10	21	8		1	Mar	10
Sites with mean peak counts of 5 or more birds in Northern Ireland†							
Lough Foyle	5	60	17	29	7	Mar	24
Carlingford Lough	2	17	4	1 ¹³	(15)	Jan	8
Belfast Lough	1 ¹³	19 ¹¹	7	1	(3)	Nov	7
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain†							
Badentarbat Bay (Achiltibuie)	0	2	2	0	11	Feb	3

† as few sites exceed the British threshold and no All-Ireland threshold has been set, qualifying levels of 10 and 5 respectively, have been chosen to select sites for presentation in this report

White-billed Diver
Gavia adamsii

Vagrant
Native Range: N America, N Europe, N Siberia

One was recorded at Water Sound from October to December; the seventh WeBS record, four of which have been in Shetland.

Little Grebe
Tachybaptus ruficollis

International threshold: 4,000
Great Britain threshold: 78
All-Ireland threshold: 25

GB max: 5,153 Oct
NI max: 444 Nov

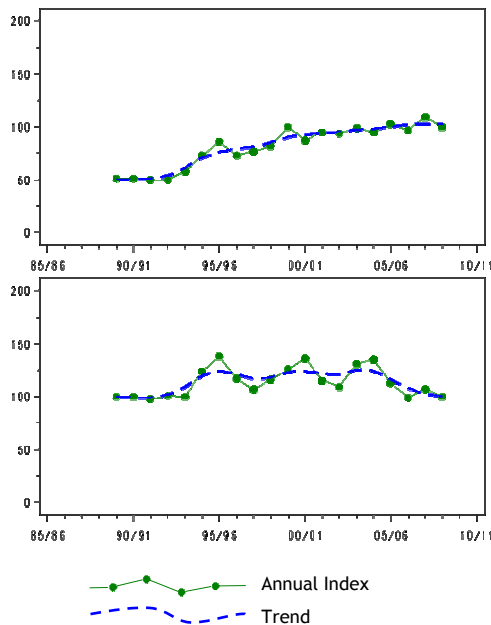


Figure 33.a, Annual indices & trend for Little Grebe for GB (above) & NI (below).

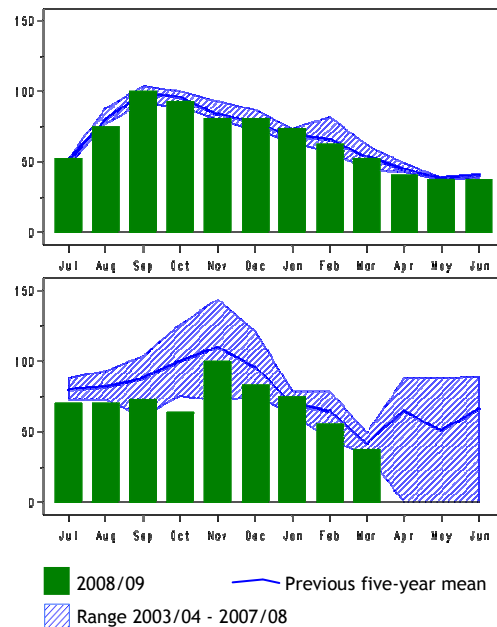


Figure 33.b, Monthly indices for Little Grebe for GB (above) & NI (below).

Little Grebes are widely dispersed on small water bodies, canals and riverine habitats throughout much of the UK. Thus, WeBS tends to monitor a relatively small proportion of the total population and care should be taken if attempting to interpret national trends based on WeBS data alone. Consequently, monitoring of Little Grebes would benefit from long-term, improved coverage of smaller, dispersed wetlands within the wider countryside.

The slow but steady increase in Little Grebes that appeared to begin in the early 1990s soon after the species was first routinely monitored, has continued in recent years; a period during which numbers have risen concurrently in The Netherlands (Hustings *et al.* 2009).

In Britain during 2008/09, the counted maximum was at a similarly high level to the previous three years. Three new sites qualified as being nationally important; Crouch-Roach Estuary, Portsmouth Harbour and Severn Estuary (where counts have remained remarkably consistent over the last four years). Numbers at the other principal sites were mixed; the most notable feature was a marked drop at Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits where the monthly peak was lower than recent years.

In Northern Ireland, a count of 318 at Loughs Neagh & Beg in November was the largest of the year anywhere in the UK. Elsewhere, numbers were in keeping with recent site averages. No sites with Little Grebes in Northern Ireland were counted between April and June.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Thames Estuary	444	377	499	292	(165)	Dec	403
Dungeness and Rye Bay	113	125	97	90	124	Sep	110
Hamford Water	89	114	87	84	119	Dec	99
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	102	77	126	82	80	Sep	93
Humber Estuary	60	64	94	(150)	(91)	Oct	92
Crouch-Roach Estuary	72 ¹¹	(33)	(44)	81	115	Oct	89 ▲
Chichester Harbour	135	95 ¹¹	66	63	79	Nov	88
Alde Complex	109	112	76	75	70	Oct	88
Rutland Water	70	96	67	93	116	Sep	88
Chew Valley Lake	110	95	80	80	70	Sep	87
Holme Pierrepont Gravel Pits	120	114	105	56	35	Oct	86
Cameron Reservoir	47	60	133	122	56	Aug	84
Severn Estuary	52	87	86	91	87	Jul	81 ▲
Portsmouth Harbour	57	(65)	(69)	(69)	104	Jan	81 ▲
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Loughs Neagh and Beg	466	330	278	396	318	Nov	358
Upper Lough Erne	104	78	106	53	78	Jan	84
Strangford Lough	76	75	80	79	76 ¹¹	Feb	77
Lower Lough Erne	53	54	78	50	(23)	Nov	59
Lough Money	51	48	40	51			48
Larne Lough	77	52	20	27	16	Dec	38
Lough Foyle	31	32	28	28	26	Oct	29
Upper Quoile River	35	33	20	15			26
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Blackwater Estuary	60	67	54	74	94	Oct	70
Old Moor	30	55	45	(60)	91	Aug	56
Tees Estuary	54	88	83	72	82	Oct	76
Carsington Water	45	89	73	96	80	Nov	77
Pitsford Reservoir	50	86	96	72	78	Jan	76

Great Crested Grebe

Podiceps cristatus

International threshold: 3,600
 Great Britain threshold: 159
 All-Ireland threshold: 55

GB max: 9,139 Sep
 NI max: 1,784 Oct

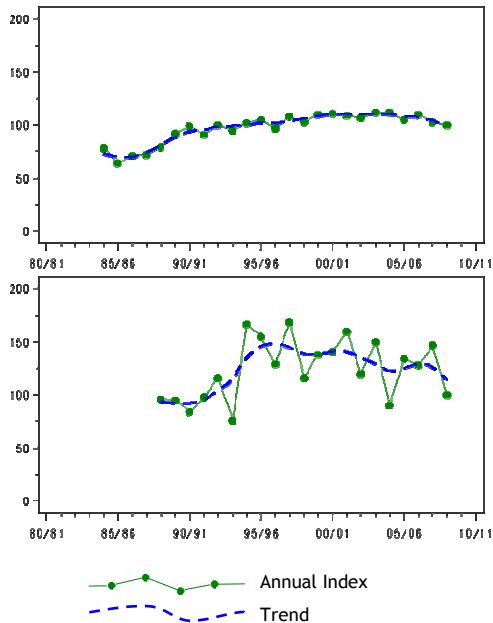


Figure 34.a, Annual indices & trend for Great Crested Grebe for GB (above) & NI (below).

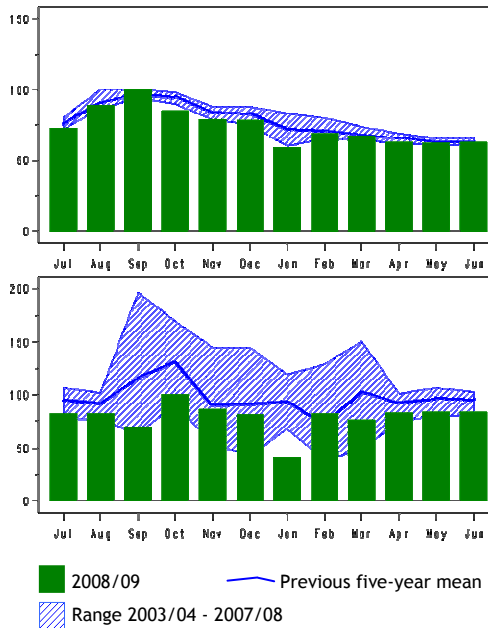


Figure 34.b, Monthly indices for Great Crested Grebe for GB (above) & NI (below).

During the winter months, Great Crested Grebes are found at inland and coastal wetlands. At the latter, however, birds are often difficult to monitor accurately when frequenting open sea and/or in unsuitable weather conditions.

In 2008/09, the largest count was from Dungeness & Rye Bay where 1,492 were seen in February; a combination of birds offshore and on the site's complex of gravel pits. This represents the highest count ever recorded by WeBS there, and along with the high count from Glyne Gap is an indication of the rich foraging conditions in the shallow waters at the eastern end of the English Channel.

The two most important individual wetland sites for Great Crested Grebes in the UK are both in Northern Ireland, namely Belfast Lough and Loughs Neagh & Beg. Both these sites fared relatively poorly in

2008/09 compared to the high maxima reported during the previous year. The peak of 1,156 at Belfast Lough in October was the lowest monthly maximum there since 1991/92. However, the peak at Loughs Neagh & Beg was largely consistent with the recent five-year mean peak. Among other important sites, maxima were close to average at Rutland Water, Grafham Water and Cotswold Water Park, up again compared to the preceding year at Chew Valley Lake, but down at Pitsford Reservoir.

This species has experienced a very slow and shallow increase over the course of the WeBS reporting period. However, the most recent indices and associated trend suggest the possibility of a slight decline, perhaps mirroring the current situation in The Netherlands (Hustings *et al.* 2009), but only further years of data will allow us to ascertain if this is genuinely the case.

	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	Mon	Mean
Sites of national importance in Great Britain							
Dungeness and Rye Bay	1,037	848	880 ¹³	653	1,492	Feb	982
Rutland Water	815	771	655	441	584	Sep	653
Grafham Water	526	463	471		471	Dec	483
Chew Valley Lake	330	275	430	665	690	Aug	478
Cotswold Water Park (West)	283	354	284	309	317	Sep	309
Pitsford Reservoir	309	308	267	312	186	Oct	276
Dee Estuary (England and Wales)	61	33	378 ¹³	458 ¹³	435 ¹³	Dec	273
Minsmere	30	18	57	1,210 ¹³	5	Aug	264
Stour Estuary	92	157	124	232	708 ¹¹	Feb	263 ▲
Glyne Gap	42	(116)	213	(206)	515	Feb	257 ▲
Lavan Sands	(446)	57	329	260	124	Nov	243
Bewl Water	330	204	188	183	224	Aug	226
Southampton Water	42	(58)	(47)	(216)	375	Dec	211 ▲
Solway Firth	(333)	233	100	84	(27)	Jan	188
Queen Mary Reservoir	262	126	130	208	98	Aug	165
Lee Valley Gravel Pits	147	175	(124)	(136)	167	Nov	163
Inner Firth of Clyde	161	153	148	141	208	Sep	162 ▲
Blithfield Reservoir	151			(168)	163	Aug	161
Sites of all-Ireland importance in Northern Ireland							
Belfast Lough	1,577	2,095	1,482	2,150	1,156	Oct	1,692
Loughs Neagh and Beg	518	449	959	1,191	752	Mar	774
Upper Lough Erne	191	147	206	171	197	Feb	182
Carlingford Lough	232	246	116	93	146	Nov	167
Strangford Lough	(64)	(82)	(65)	(137)	145	Feb	145
Lough Foyle	50	169	116	116	49	Oct	100
Lower Lough Erne	117	48	123	55	(23)	Feb	86
Larne Lough	50	56	84	105	81	Nov	75
Sites no longer meeting table qualifying levels in WeBS-Year 2008/09							
Forth Estuary	313	123	95	139	109	Dec	156
Loch Leven	127	150	198	141	157 ¹³	Nov	155
Loch Ryan	299	193	77	80	34	Feb	137
Morecambe Bay	(91)	(138)	(62)	(80)	99	Dec	119
Sites below table qualifying levels but exceeding threshold in WeBS-Year 2008/09 in Great Britain							
Swansea Bay	26	205	84	102	327	Dec	149
Colne Estuary	15	27	14	15	323	Feb	79
Pegwell Bay	233	38	48	110	300	Mar	146
Swale Estuary	63	(52)	51	(41)	(191)	Mar	102
Alton Water	97	86	113	105	169	Dec	114